

Esky's Demise Symbolizes Birth of the New Esquire

BY RONALD L. SOBLE

Times Staff Writer

Clay Felker, the new president and chief executive officer of Esquire magazine, says Esky, the pop-eyed cartoon character which for years had graced the publication's cover, is passe.

"Esky doesn't represent the man we're aiming at," says Felker. "All he was doing was leering at women."

"Esky," chimed in Milton Glaser, Esquire's new design director and Felker's partner in revitalizing the 45-year-old publication, "was an aging Lothario."

The passing of Esquire's plump old playboy into journalistic history symbolizes the dramatic overhaul Felker and Glaser are seeking to accomplish with a magazine that once boasted some of the finest contemporary writing available.

Felker and Glaser, in town Wednesday to tell the Advertising Club of Los Angeles about their plans, bought Esquire last September and own 50% of the new venture, Esquire Magazine Inc., a privately held company. The other 50% is owned by the London-based Associated Newspapers Group.

As part of their plans to make Esquire more timely, the magazine will start appearing twice a month, starting with a mid-February issue.

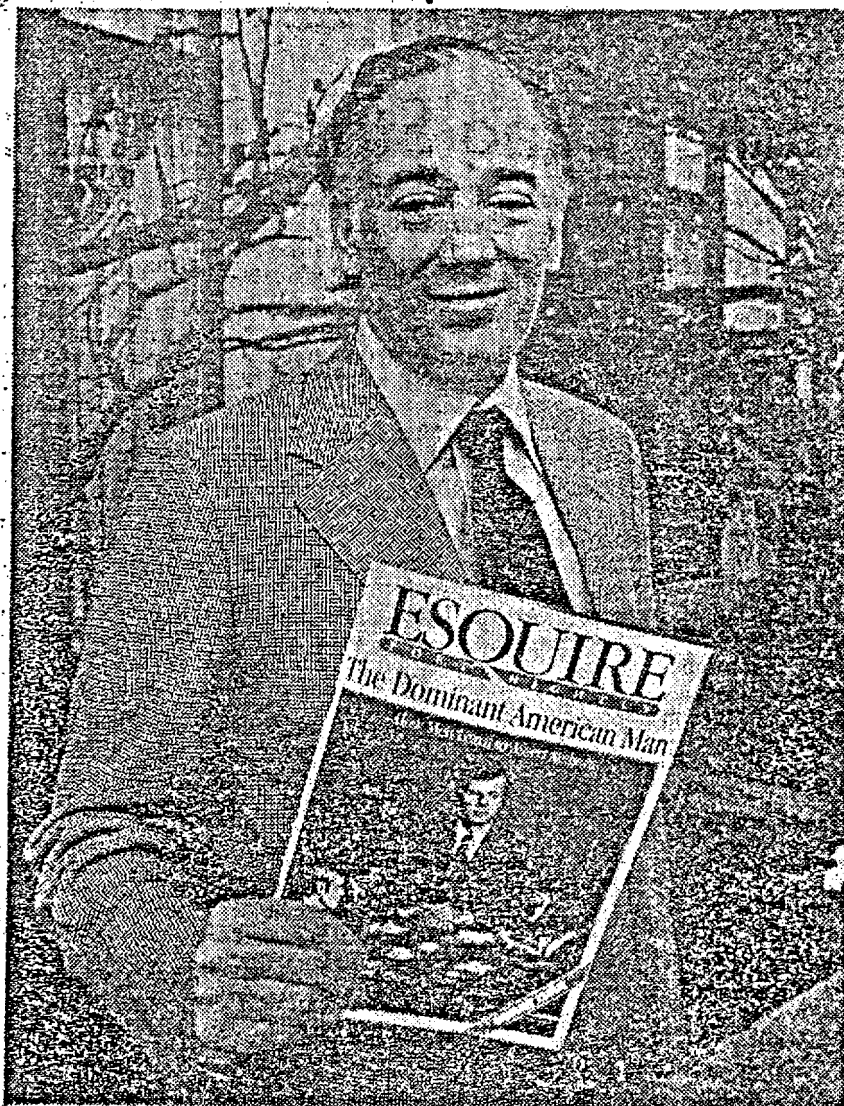
Other changes were readily apparent in a "dummy" issue of the publication, which was founded by the late Arnold Gingrich in 1903.

Glaser, 48, who has an international reputation as a top magazine designer (Paris Match, and the Village Voice are among his credits) clearly has brought the clean typographical style he made so successful at New York Magazines to the new Esquire.

Glaser worked closely with the year-old Felker on New York until January 10 1977. Felker, who helped found New York and was its guiding light, then lost a battle with his partners, who sold control of the magazine to Australian publisher Rupert Murdoch.

Articles in the new Esquire will attempt to provide more career and current information on finance, politics, books and the national cultural scene.

But more importantly, Felker said, Esquire is changing direction to carve a niche for itself to satisfy what he sees as the new reading needs of the American man.



NO CHEESECAKE—New Esquire chief Clay Felker says the magazine's contemporary style excludes any thoughts of cheesecake.

Esquire, after stunning editorial successes in the 1930s and again in the 1950s and 1960s, didn't change direction with the culture of the 1970s, he continued.

"People no longer measure success by the symbol of consumption," he said, "but by their own experience and the quality of their lives."

Reflecting on this new posture, Felker noted that the first few issues will have an excerpt from entertainer David Frost's book on his Nixon TV interviews; a piece by national editor Richard Reeves on individualists "who have stood up to the system;" a story on baseball star Reggie Jackson, and articles on cooking from a man's point of view and on balloon skiing.

Felker said Esquire also would revive its tradition of printing quality fiction as well as providing service material. "... We have retained many of the things that made Esquire memorable in the past—in particular, the good writers and good writing," he said.

In the past, Esquire was a literary bank which contained articles and writings by Wolfe, Steinbeck, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Capote, Bradbury, Mencken, Dos Passos and Hammett.

"It's a national magazine now," said Felker. "It will be read by a more affluent, somewhat older, more professional man."